

## Utah Influenza Surveillance Program

Public health has developed a comprehensive surveillance system to detect and characterize annual influenza outbreaks in Utah. This year, improvements have been made to minimize required resources for surveillance while maximizing the information gathered from each element of the system. During this season, public health will:

- Collect data on hospitalized, laboratory-confirmed influenza cases in order to describe the severity of the season. This surveillance strategy has been implemented in other states such as Colorado, and is being reviewed by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a surveillance method that may be implemented nationally.
- Collect information on patients seen for influenza-like illness at 33 sentinel practices located throughout Utah. This year, providers will report additional data allowing us to track visits by age group.
- Track school absenteeism at 45 sites located throughout Utah. With the help of school nurses, we have been able to improve the quality of absenteeism data to better track absences due to influenza.
- Continue to test samples from hospitals and selected clinics to provide information on circulating influenza virus types.
- Track urgent care visits for respiratory illness through a system developed in partnership with the Universities of Pittsburgh and Utah and Intermountain Health Care.

Influenza-like illness and school absenteeism data have been collected for several years, so we will be able to compare the burden of influenza in the community with data from prior years. We also have data on hospitalized influenza cases from last year and will be comparing cases from this season to those from last year.

These modifications to the influenza surveillance system have eliminated the need for reporting of all laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza. In the past several years, the reporting of thousands of cases of influenza to public health has taken many resources, both from the medical community as well as from public health. Utilizing the components listed above reduces the resources required for reporting cases while ensuring that public health can adequately detect, describe, and manage annual influenza outbreaks in Utah.

